DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 288 762 SO 018 387

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TITLE Young People and Peace: Prerequisites for Peace-Oriented Instruction.
INSTITUTION National Swedish Board of Education, Stockholm.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 17p.; Bibliography is in Swedish.
AVAILABLE FROM Swedish National Board of Education, Department for Coordination and Planning, Information and Documentation Section, S-106 42, Stockholm, Sweden.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - General (140)
JOURNAL CIT School Research Newsletter; n1 Apr 1987

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Concept Formation; Concept Teaching; Conflict; *Conflict Resolution; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Fundamental Concepts; *Peace; Research Projects; *Teaching Methods; *War
IDENTIFIERS Conceptual Analysis; *Peace Education; Peace Studies; *Sweden

ABSTRACT

Helping children and youth learn through school experiences to deal constructively with questions of peace, war, and ways to promote peace preparedness is the purpose of this four-year peace education project. The principal goals of the project include: (1) an inventory and analysis of experiences and related peace education projects in various countries; (2) studies of young people's concepts of war, peace, or the enemy; (3) explorations of viewpoints concerning schools' roles in pursuit of peace preparedness; (4) studies of various ways that schools teach war and peace concepts; and (5) the collection of related project reports, bibliographies, analyses, research, models, and teacher guides. In 1987, during the initial stages of this project, an inventory and analysis of literature, a questionnaire to be sent to schools in selected countries, pilot studies concerning war and peace concepts, and interviews with experts in the field of peace education were completed. (JHP)

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YOUNG PEOPLE AND PEACE - PREREQUISITES FOR

PEACE-ORIENTED INSTRUCTION.

SCHOOL RESEARCH NEWSLETTER 1987.1

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SCHOOL RESEARCH Newsletter

APRIL 1987

FIELD - TOPIC 1987:1
Peace education
Internationalisation
Interdisciplinary school objectives

Current Project

TITLE OF PROJECT: YOUNG PEOPLE AND PEACE - PREREQUISITES FOR PEACE-ORIENTED INSTRUCTION

("PEACE PREPAREDNESS" has also been used as a handy umbrella heading)

In news media and elsewhere, children and young persons are confronted with dramatic details about a possible nuclear war and its horrendous consequences. They often feel uneasy and anxious about the future. This has made it natural to ask how schools ought to deal with questions of war and peace and pupils' worries. Can schools provide some form of peace-oriented instruction or peace education? How should such instruction be designed?

The aim of the present project is to augment our knowledge of possible ways of helping children and young persons, through school, to deal constructively with questions of war and peace and in other ways to promote "peace preparedness".

The work of the project involves a variety of tasks: (1) Inventory and analysis of experience of peace education in various countries. (2) Studies of children's and young persons' images of war and peace. (3) Collection and analysis of viewpoints on the role of schools in pursuit of "peace preparedness". (4) School experiments, focusing on practical ways in which schools can organise peace-oriented activities.

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PROJECT NO.: 6348

Published by Swedish National Board of Education, Department for Coordination and Planning, Information and Documentation Section, S-106 42 Stockholm, Sweden. Telephone: + 46 8 783 20 00
Responsible Editor: Inger Marklund. Editor: Annica Otter.

ISSN 0345-5343

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In recent years, questions concerning peace and the nuclear threat have attracted growing interest on the part of psychologists and educationalists. At the annual congresses of the American Psychological Association, a large number of papers have been presented on studies concerning fear of nuclear conflict; and, in 1986, both European Psychologists for Peace and a joint organisation of teachers' associations for peace from various countries organised international conferences dealing, from many different angles, with educational and psychological tasks in the peace context.

In Scandinavia, Norway, with its tradition of peace research, has for a number of years had a vigorous school debate relating to the concepts of "disarmament education" and "peace education".. In Finland a couple of years ago, Scandinavian educational researchers gathered for a conference on peace education as a pedagogical problem. In Sweden the National Board of Education has encouraged activities in this field, partly by producing special service material on peace education and by convening conferences; and a Danish book on peace education and peace psychology remarks that the cause of peace has now reached "school age" in Denmark.

One of the main reasons for this interest and activity in recent years is, of course, that more and more people are coming to realise the absurdity of today's nuclear-dominated "security policy", which has gradually made the world more and more dangerous, not safer, to live in. In news media and elsewhere, children and young persons are being confronted with dramatic details about a possible nuclear war and its horrendous consequences. They frequently feel uneasy and anxious about the future. Surveys confirming this have been presented from various parts of the world; in Sweden, for example, we can refer to studies under the "Future Preparedness as an Educational Objective" project (cf. Ankarstrand-Lindström, 1984b; Bjerstedt, 1986b; Bjurwill, 1986).

This situation makes it more vital than ever to ask how schools should deal with questions of war and peace and pupils' uneasiness. Can the

schools of the world do anything to help enhance the possibilities of peaceful co-existence? Can schools provide any form of peace-oriented instruction or peace education? What special objectives ought this to imply? What methods could be relevant?

Questions of this kind are now being asked in many parts of the world. There are several publications in which these problems are debated. There are many conceptual analyses relating to peace and peace education, and quite a few attempts have been made to compile teaching materials in this context. Hitherto, however, one finds that relatively few attempts have been made to research the feasibility of adequate peace education or to systematically follow up and evaluate teaching experiments in this context. In other words, there is a substantial need for educational and psychological research and development in the peace education context.

This is the background to a number of studies which we have launched at the Malmö School of Education on the subject of schools and peace. As an umbrella heading we have used the term "peace preparedness". The main body of work is currently proceeding under a four-year project supported by the NBE and officially entitled "Young People and Peace - Prerequisites for Peace-Oriented Instruction" (1986/87-1989/90). Around this nucleus, certain supplementary activities are also being conducted by non-project members, and certain preparations for the project were undertaken as separate assignments.

The overriding aim of the project is to augment our knowledge of possible ways, in school and by means of information measures elsewhere, of helping children and young persons to deal constructively with questions of war and peace and generally to promote "peace preparedness". The expression "augment our knowledge" must also be taken to include such things as "developing more constructive ideas about" and "creating a more balanced picture of".

PRINCIPAL TASKS

The overriding purpose described above could be linked up with several different concrete investigative strategies. After introductory planning, however, the work of the project has been made to focus on five principal tasks:

(1) Inventory and analysis of experience and related research from various countries. First of all this means finding out in detail what has actually been done and thought on the subject of these questions previously in various countries. There are no very firm research traditions to go by. Since these questions have been treated in so many different contexts (in various disciplines, with a wide variety of relevance to educational realities and through publication in very different reports and periodicals which are not infrequently hard to come by), there would seem to be a great need for an inventory and integration. Apart from the inventory of literature, a supplementary survey by means of an international questionnaire would serve a useful purpose.

(2) Studies of conceptions (war, peace, enemy images etc.). It is reasonable to suppose that an educationalist has a better chance of acting adequately if he can refer to existing conceptions. There is probably a better chance of making recommendations of a more general kind about the character of educational inputs at different age levels if one is better acquainted with typical ideas. And indeed, our preconceptions about war and peace and about the causes of war and the prospects of peace probably exert quite a tangible influence on our preparedness to act. We therefore have reason to try to expand our knowledge by means of empirical studies of actual ideas. In the first instance this will involve studies in developmental psychology of children and young persons of various ages. But the ideas of teachers and teacher-trainees in this context will also be touched on.

(3) Explorations of viewpoints concerning the role of school in pursuit of "peace preparedness"; sub-goal analysis. Part of the

task here is to generate ideas through individual interviews. What ideas and, possibly, recommendations can people with a practical or theoretical interest in peace education or other peace promotion supply concerning "peace-educating" or "peace-promoting" measures through schools? By way of introduction, an education for peace has been tentatively analysed in terms of non-violence preparedness, world citizen responsibility, egalitarian attitudes and capacity to search critically for alternatives, and these target fields in turn have been divided into a number of sub-objectives focusing on various cognitive components, value perspectives and forms of preparedness for action. It would be useful to test and refine this analysis in confrontation, for example, with the opinion-probing activities mentioned above. A list of sub-objectives thus tested and further differentiated could then provide support for educational deliberations, the construction of materials and evaluations.

(4) Studies of the way in which schools treat or can treat war and peace and can generally work for "peace preparedness" (school experiments). Against the background of the material from points 1-3, and in partnership with teachers, certain measures will be studied in minor experiments which are evaluated in relation to specified objectives and in close conjunction with those involved. Various approaches have been tried by teachers at different levels, in the form of free experimentation. This is useful, but it would be more useful still if some of these activities were to be undertaken in collaboration with "companion researchers", who would be able to conduct systematic evaluations in order to make better use of the experience gained and so as to document it for the benefit of other teachers as well. Experiments of roughly this character were started under a previous project (see Ankarstrand-Lindström, 1984a); an expansion of this to other school levels and other procedures is planned in the course of the present project.

(5) Project reports of different kinds. The aim is for the project to lead to several different kinds of "product": (a) bibliographical compilations with commentaries ("reader's guides"); (b) empirical research reports on different sub-studies in the project; (c) a concluding theoretical analysis in which an attempt is made to build an integrated model for the field of "peace-oriented instruction" which can serve to integrate the work done and can also furnish guidance for continuing research in the field; (d) publications which can provide input material for discussion and studies in this field by teachers and teacher-trainees. In field (d) plans have been made for "minor publications" on individual sectors of the project and on a more comprehensive "teacher's guide" at the end of the project.

Perhaps it should be added that part of the detailed content of tasks 2, 3 and 4 should be governed by the findings emerging from the analyses in task 1. This is in keeping with the stepwise exploratory character of the work. Close predefinition of the strategy for subsequent phases of the project has therefore not been judged desirable.

PROGRAMME AND METHODS

The preliminary programme can be approximately illustrated as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Task 1	XXXX	X	X	
Task 2	XX	XXXX	XX	
Task 3	XX	XXXX	XX	
Task 4		X	XXXX	XX
Task 5	X	X	X	XXXX

The larger the number of crosses put beside a particular task in a particular working year, the heavier the work input is intended to be. To some extent the different tasks are planned to proceed parallel during the course of the project, but at the same time it is natural for tasks 1-3 to predominate during the first half of the project, for task 4 to come comparatively late (mainly during the third year's work)

and for most of the reporting work (task 5) to be done during the final phase.

As has already been intimated, the methods used will be of many different kinds. Task 1 will involve both manual and computer-aided information retrieval and bibliographical and analytical presentations. An international questionnaire is also included. In task 2 we will be testing a number of different techniques for studying complex ideas. Here the project will also to some extent be concerned with the development and testing of methods. Interviews of different kinds will be the principal method used for task 3. In task 4 a series of educational experiments are planned, using both formative and summative evaluation.

REPORTS SO FAR

The minor publications and reports so far compiled under the project (or as preparations for the same) are listed in the references at the end of this presentation. Readers requiring further information about our work are referred to those publications which, with the exception of Bjerstedt, 1985a and 1986b, are obtainable from our department (att.: B. Frank).

At the time of writing (April 1987) the four-year project is in its first year. Understandably, therefore, the minor publications which have been issued cover only a small proportion of the entire problem field for the project. Finally, by way of guidance, here are some rther particulars about the content and character of some of the olications.

(a) Inventory and analysis of literature, compilation of guides to literature. As can be seen from the programme, the first main task of the project is to carry out an inventory, analysis and documentation of international literature in this field. The aids we have compiled are of three main types:

(1) A simple bibliographical conspectus is included in Bjerstedt, 1985b. Examples of various kinds of literature have been listed

and classified with reference to their content. Short introductory commentaries are provided (in English and Swedish), but the individual references are not annotated. (2) In other reports we have collected short summaries of reports, books and articles in the field. As part of a previous project we compiled a collection of abstracts of this kind in English, mainly referring to works published between 1966 and 1975 (Bjerstedt & Gustafsson, 1977). We have now compiled a similar, though more comprehensive presentation of abstracts in English, referring to works published between 1976 and 1986 (Bjerstedt & Gustafsson, 1986). The former publication describes about ninety works, the latter some 300. A collection of abstracts in Swedish was subsequently published in a separate report, in which more emphasis was put on Swedish publications (Bjerstedt, Gustafsson & Rosenqvist, 1987). (3) Finally, we have selected a number of seminal works of international literature for more detailed comment and analysis in Swedish. So far, six such analyses have been published (Berg, 1986a, 1986b; Rosenqvist, 1986a, 1986b, 1987; Svensson, 1986).

(b) An international questionnaire. An international questionnaire was circulated in order to obtain a somewhat more comprehensive and up-to-date picture of experience in the field of peace education in different countries. This was addressed to ministries of education (or the corresponding school authorities) in different countries. The recipients were asked to reply to a number of questions about the position of peace education in their own country, and we also expressed a desire to see relevant texts and documents. A relatively detailed presentation of the results of the questionnaire is given, in Swedish, in Bjerstedt, 1986d; a briefer presentation in English will be found in Bjerstedt, 1986c. Certain parts of the abundant material in the form of books, reports, newspaper articles etc. which we received in connection with this international questionnaire will, however, be further examined and reported on separately. One of the main impressions left by the questionnaire study was that the role of peace questions in schools is currently attracting a great deal of interest in many countries. Ten or fifteen years ago, discussions of peace

and schools were uncommon, whereas today the school policy documents of several countries expressly refer to peace education as an important task for schools. One can speak of a growing legalisation of peace education in the schools of the world.

(c) Pilot studies of conceptions in the context of war and peace. Certain pilot studies have been started concerning ideas in our problem field; here we can refer to Ankarstrand-Lindström & Bjerstedt, 1987 (concerning conceptions among trainee teachers) and Magnusdóttir, 1986 (conceptions among younger children).

(d) Individual interviews of experts and interested parties in the peace education/peace research sector. We have started a series of interviews of persons who have taken a special, active interest in peace education/peace research. Some of these interviews will be published in extenso, with the approval of the interviewees. So far five of these full-length interviews have made their way into our minor publications: talks with two Danish and three Swedish experts (see Jensen, Øberg & The Peace Preparedness Project, 1987; Lindholm & The Peace Preparedness Project, 1986; Pikas & The Peace Preparedness Project, 1986; Thelin & The Peace Preparedness Project, 1986).

(e) Other publications. Some of the publications we have issued have been of an analytical, argumentative character (e.g Bjerstedt, 1985, 1986f, 1986g). These deal among other things with the question of which sub-objectives we should pursue in the course of peace-oriented instruction. Other publications deal with studies which are separate from our main project but have been described by persons with whom we have collaborated in various ways. They include a summary of the findings from a questionnaire on peace instruction in teacher education (Rudvall, 1986) and a report on experience of peace-oriented work in pre-school education (Carlander-Larsson, 1985). Mention can also be made of a brief presentation of debate and R&D activity in Sweden relating to peace-oriented school activities (Bjerstedt, 1986a).

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School Research Newsletter contains reviews of current and terminated research within the field of education.

School Research Newsletter is published and distributed in an edition of 750 issues ten times per year. The Newsletter is obtained free of charge.

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